

BLOOD SPACE GAZETTEER THE SOLAR COURT



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BLOOD SPACE GAZETTEER

THE SOLAR COURT

Author: Alexander Augunas, Matt Banach

Cover Artist: Jacob Blackmon

Development: Alexander Augunas

Interior Artists: Jacob Blackmon, cgartiste, gvbn10, tk769

RGG Consigliere: Stan!

RGG Webmaster: LJ Stephens

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ABOUT EVERYBODY GAMES

Everybody Games began as the blog of Alexander Augunas in January 2014 under the name Everyman Gaming, where he wrote about *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* tips, tricks, and techniques for both players and GMs. In May of 2014, Alex transformed Everyman Gaming into the company it is today so he could begin self-publishing his works. In 2016, he teamed up with Rogue Genius Games, and in 2019, the company's name changed to Everybody Games in order to reflect our mission to get everyone gaming.

Want to check out a full listing of Everybody Games' products and stay up-to-date with Everybody Games' announcements? Visit [http://www.everybodygames.net!](http://www.everybodygames.net) You can also follow Everybody Games on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ttrpgeverybodygames> or on Twitter using our handle, [@EBGamesLLC](https://twitter.com/EBGamesLLC).

ABOUT ROGUE GENIUS GAMES

Rogue Genius Games was founded in 2013 by Stan!, Lj Stephens, and Owen K.C. Stephens as a spiritual successor to Super Genius Games. Rogue Genius Games focuses on creating fast, simple games such as *Gingerbread Kaiju* and expansions for Open Game License compatible games like *Mutants and Masterminds*, *Pathfinder* 1st and 2nd editions, and *Starfinder*. Rogue Genius Games also writes OGL material for other games, such as 5th Edition.

You can learn about Rogue Genius Games at <https://www.RogueGeniusGames.com>, or Lead Genius Owen K.C. Stephens' blog, which can be found at owenkstephens.com. Owen regularly engages with his fans on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/OwenK.C.Stephens> and on Twitter at https://twitter.com/Owen_Stephens. He also offers exclusive content to Patrons (<http://www.patreon.com/OwenKCStephens>).

ACCESSING: GAZETTEER...

ACCESS: GRANTED.

Welcome to the *BLOOD SPACE GAZETTEER*, brought to you by Everybody Games and Rogue Genius Games. We know you have tons of questions regarding our shared campaign setting, Blood Space, and we're here to answer them for you! From entire worlds to corporate interests and plots, Everybody Games and Rogue Genius Games are committed to giving you everything you need to run a campaign in the Xa-Osoro System (or live in it, if you're a player).

The Blood Space campaign setting is the brain child of Alexander Augunas, Matt Banach, Matt Morris, and Owen K.C. Stephens, and builds off of ideas that Everybody Games and Rogue Genius Games have seeded throughout the first two years of the *Starfinder Roleplaying Game's* existence. We hope that your appetite has been whet waiting for the Blood Space Gazetteer, and that this product satisfyingly meets and exceeds your expectations. Rogue Genius Games and Everybody Games firmly stand by the Blood Space campaign setting as an interesting place to live and adventure. It's a place where society has clearly progressed, but the world itself has been wracked by cataclysm and tragedy for over three centuries. The Blood Space campaign setting needs heroes to help them claim their rightful place in the galaxy—heroes like you!

– Alexander Augunas, Publisher of Everybody Games

– Owen K.C. Stephens, Publisher of Rogue Genius Games

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ACCESSING ARCHIVES QUERY: XA-OSORO SYSTEM

Hello, and thank you for purchasing *BLOOD SPACE GAZETTEER: ULO!* The Blood Space campaign setting is an effort between Everybody Games and Rogue Genius Games to create a shared campaign setting to lend context to our *Starfinder Roleplaying Game* products. Blood Space has existed for as long as both companies have been producing third-party *Starfinder* content; our best-selling, first-ever product, the *Starfarer's Companion* has the very first inklings of this campaign setting sprinkled throughout its races entries, and we've been growing it ever since in nearly every Everybody Games product for *Starfinder* as well as in an assortment of Rogue Genius Games products. After over two years of tantalizing hints and tidbits of information, we're happy to finally bring YOU the Blood Space you deserve with our newest product line, the Blood Space Gazetteer. Each issue will focus on a specific part of the Blood Space campaign setting; usually a planet and its surrounding satellites. This issue spotlights Ulo, a supermassive ice giant that's swarming with corporations looking to use and abuse its abundant resources in wake of the Radiant Imperium's collapse.

Here are some things you should know about the Blood Space campaign setting when reading this entry.

- » **Azan** is the former home world of humanity and several other races in the Xa-Osoro System. When Osoro went supernova during the Regicide, the planet was blown apart and its sundered ruins became an asteroid belt.
- » **Blood Space** is a supernatural nebula that permeates the Xa-Osoro System. When the star Osoro went supernova following its collapse into a black hole, much of its matter was expelled outward in a wave of red clouds with horrifying mutative effects called blood space. Blood space's strange emanations have cursed many planets and moons with horrific afflictions, most notably a corruption called blood madness.
- » The **Nova Age** is the Xa-Osoran term for a phenomenon resulting in mass societal fugue experienced by everyone living in the Xa-Osoro System. As the Xa-Osorans made contact with other worlds, they've come to find that this fugue seems to have affected nearly every society in the galaxy to some capacity.
- » The **Radiant Imperium** is the central governing body of the Xa-Osoro System. Originally from Azan, they formed a system-spanning empire before the Nova Age. In wake of the Regicide, the Imperium nearly collapsed, split into numerous rival factions vying for control of the empire's resurrection.
- » The **Regicide** refers to the death of the star Osoro, one of the Xa-Osoro System's binary stars (the other being Xa). The Regicide occurred at some point during the fugue of the Nova Age, though its cause and culprit remain mysterious and hotly debated by scholars.



THE SOLAR COURT

“For a brief moment, the stars flickered and died. Not just Osoro, but all of them. Myriads of constellations, entire galaxies, and the Empress herself. All gone for a single, agonizing moment that might have lasted an eternity. Time no longer had meaning. The Emperor was dead, his blood oozing all around us into the greedy maw of an uncaring void.”

- Author Unknown

Xa THE EMPRESS

Diameter	x100
Mass	x280,000
Gravity	x28
Atmosphere	None
Local Day	--
Local Year	--
Population	4.5 million (40% efreeti, 15% celestial, 10% dwarf, 10% human, 10% kitsune, 10% kobold, 5% elf, 10% other)

OSORO THE EMPEROR

Diameter	4 miles
Mass	x2,800,000
Gravity	x28
Atmosphere	None
Local Day	--
Local Year	--
Population	1.5 million (95% wayang, 5% other)

Millennia before the Nova Age and the dreaded Regicide, the people of the Xa-Osoro System personified the planets and binary stars of their home system, believing them to be the embodiments of the deities who imparted their blessings upon each of the star system's worlds. Chief among these deities were Xa, the Empress, and Osoro, the Emperor, the stars that danced eternally at the heart of the star system and the cosmic rules of the Xa-Osoran pantheon. The titular emperor and empress of the Xa-Osoro System have always been eclipsing binaries, so from every planet in the system the two stars often appeared to waltz across the skies before briefly eclipsing one another at a singular point before turning away once more. Because both stars have an equal amount of mass, the barycenter between each star was placed equally between both Emperor and Empress, with the total distance between both measuring about 500 million miles. As a result, the system's planets seemingly orbit both stars simultaneously, as if the Solar Court's combined gyrations acted as a single celestial entity exerting their combined gravitational force

Today, however, only a single sun illuminates the skies of the Xa-Osoro System's planets. Amidst the fugue of the Nova Age, the star Osoro simultaneously exploded and imploded as its namesake deity died, collapsing into a miniature black hole while spewing a blood-red nebula into the surrounding star system. By all strictly scientific expectations, the supernova's destructive power should have irreparably destroyed the balance of the entire solar system, obliterating the inner planets in nuclear fire while pushing the outer planets off into the dark void of space. For reasons forgotten to the Nova Age, if they were ever scientifically understood at all, that didn't happen. People of faith in the Xa-Osoro System believe that the Empress herself somehow intervened, theorizing that she diverted most of Osoro's explosive energy into her own star before gravitationally stabilizing the orbits of the disturbed planets as her partner shrank into a singularity, perhaps explaining how Xa alone shines as brightly as two stars in the modern era.

Unfortunately, Xa's intervention did not spare the people of the Xa-Osoro System from the ravages of Osoro's death. Azan, the planet closest to Xa and the seat of the Radiant Imperium, was consumed in radioactive fire before shattering into innumerable pieces. Worse, the gory nebula left behind by the star's demise reeked with abyssal energy, creating the phenomenon known as blood space. The most widely accepted theory regarding the blood space phenomenon states that Osoro's supernova energy was somehow displaced into the planar boundaries between the Material Plane and the abyss, resulting in quintessential undulations that ripped Azan apart while allowing energy from the abyss to seep through, collapsing Osoro into a black hole and expelling blood space into the surrounding system. Whatever happened, Osoro's death and subsequent rebirth as a black hole fragmented space-time within the system, erasing roughly a millennium of time from the collective memories of the Xa-Osorans. Modern history now spans a mere 300 years prior to the end of this system-wide fugue, which is known as the Nova Age.

Xa is a yellow dwarf star, as was Osoro prior to the Regicide. Roughly 73% of Xa's mass consists of hydrogen while the rest is mostly helium, with smaller quantities of heavier elements like oxygen, carbon, neon, and iron present throughout. Impossibly hot and possessing gravitational forces sufficient to crush even the most advanced starships, the only creatures capable of surviving on Xa are those who are completely immune to both heat and gravity, with the most likely inhabitants being solar wisps, fire elementals, and lightning elementals. Like all stars, an open portal to the Positive Energy Plane is believed to exist at Xa's heart, although no known mortal has ever managed to successfully reach a sun's core alive to find out. Even if one could survive the immense gravity, pressure, and heat, many scientists theorize that space-time begins to dilate that close to the center of gravity within a star's core, opening the possibility that anyone attempting to

delve into a star's depths might actually catapult themselves into the distant past or the far-flung future.

Post-Regicide, Osoro retains all of the mass it once possessed as a yellow dwarf star, but has since collapsed into a singularity approximately 4 miles in diameter. Due to its small size, it is nearly impossible to see Osoro without the aide of a powerful telescope or a similar device, but unlike most black holes Osoro is plainly visible due to its proximity to Xa; Osoro constantly siphons both light and mass from Xa as the undead star dances around it's baycenter with its still-living partner, bringing her closer to her own theorized demise with every step of their celestial waltz. The light siphoned from Xa gives Osoro an unsettling corona at all times, a swirling accretion disk that often makes it appear like Osoro is surrounded by a fiery halo. Xa and Osoro have functionally equal masses—and therefore gravitational forces—despite their immense differences in size, but Xa is steadily losing both mass and energy to Osoro's irresistible gravitational hunger. While most astrophysicists predict that Xa will remain a viable radiant star for a billion years or more, many who gaze upon this titanic act of solar predation cannot help but feel a twinge of worry. After all, Osoro's invisible presence causes frequent eclipse-like optical effects on every planet within the star system, resultant from the Emperor's gravity gobbling up a portion of his Empress's light. Though Osoro's size ensures that no world is ever plunged completely into darkness, biannual eclipses affect every world in the system, dimming the ambient sunlight and drastically warping Xa's appearance in the sky for up to an entire month at the waltz's zenith.

RESIDENTS

If Xa or Osoro have native residents, they're mostly elementals; few other creatures could survive naturally on the surface of a star or within the singularity of a black hole. Though nowhere near as populated as proper worlds in the Xa-Osoro System, the Emperor's Court is nonetheless home to thriving, albeit small, civilizations. Most populous on Xa are enclaves of celestial beings known as isoleis. Essentially angels born of elemental fire, isoleis are the imperial servitors of the deities Xa and Osoro, said to be the Emperor and Empress's fire given form and thought. Capable of plumbing the depths of stars without fear of harm, it's impossible to truly know just how expansive their holdings are upon Xa, as many have implied that entire communes of their kind exist both within Xa's depths and within the deity's divine realm, which is said to reside within Eden, often called the Positive Energy Plane. Most isolei are more than willing to converse with mortals if asked, though they're careful to make sure mortals have taken the proper precautions before interacting with them as their bodies are essentially living starstuff and extremely radioactive as a result. On the topic of what fate befell Osoro, the isolei either will not comment or do not know, though they're quick to avoid the subject when asked.

Although rare elsewhere in the Xa-Osoro System, impish creatures of shadow called wayangs call the Solar Court their home, though never anywhere illuminated completely by Xa's light. Instead, nearly all of the system's wayang populations dwell upon a singular space station of enormous size called *Dissolution's Child*, whose systems are aligned to keep the station and its wayang passengers perfectly positioned so that from their perspective, Xa is eternally eclipsed by Osoro's shadow. Originally from the eternal night of the Shadow Dimension, the early wayangs found themselves stranded on Azan underneath the harsh light of the world's twin suns after a planar convergence weakened the boundaries between the Shadow Dimension and the Material Universe. Since then, the wayangs have spent millennia trying to escape the searing light and viewed Osoro's death not as cause for mourning, but celebration. By pooling together much of their people's resources, the wayangs constructed a vessel that would allow them to revel before Osoro in perpetual twilight. Although wayangs aren't inherently hostile towards the other peoples of the Xa-Osoro System, they can be off-putting and the Radiant Imperium has largely left the species alone aboard *Dissolution's Child*, as few starships possess the technology necessary to approach the station without its assistance. Numerous clans with traditions harkening back to the old ways exist aboard *Dissolution's Child*, though the wayang themselves are far from unsophisticated. Aboard their station, the wayangs constantly explore and revel in entropy, making *Dissolution's Child* also the premiere center of learning for those seeking monastic tutelage in vanguard disciplines, and solarian temples devoted to the exclusive use of graviton revelations can be found there as well. Recently, a popular movement aboard *Dissolution's Child* posits the notion of moving the space station closer to Osoro's event horizon. While dangerous, the notion is made tantalizingly tempting due to several wayang theories that suggest doing so might allow them to learn to harness the space-time continuum for their purposes.

Ripples in the raw quintessence that forms the barriers between the planes has caused more than just blood space to emerge from dimensions unknown. Perhaps due to an affinity for Xa's own oppressive heat, rifts between the Mortal Universe and the Muspelheim, the elemental plane of fire, frequent Xa's surface, some of which have been made into permanent gates by the Brass Nation. Populated by efreeti and their slaves. Several large Brass Nation enclaves exist upon Xa, much to the chagrin of the isoleis who dwell there. Ceaseless war between the celestials and the fire genies ultimately trigger massive solar flares as both sides harness Xa's raw nuclear power to unleash devastating attacks against one another. Though the Sultana of the Brass Nation is far too proud to ever fully surrender control of Xa to her rivals, the efreeti have mostly switched their focus to warring with their rivals on Halameth, and as a result most of their holdings on Xa are lightly staffed fortifications.

In addition to these major groups that call Xa and Osoro home, a member of nearly any of the Radiant Imperium's common species can be found living in the Solar Court, either on lightly-manned space stations designed to conduct scientific research on the binary stars or within Xa'Crylla, a magnificent crystal balance suspended within the molten plasma of Xa's surface. Significantly fewer people live in the Solar Court than elsewhere in the Xa-Osoro System; most habitable locations are manned exclusively by scientists and other explorers, while *Dissolution's Child* and Xa'Crystall tend to be too nonsecular for the average citizen, devoted to the religious philosophy of the Dissolution or worship of Xa the Empress, respectfully. Those who call the Solar Court home often find themselves in a world apart from the trials and troubles of the Radiant Imperium, however, insignificant specks before the ancient grandeur of the source of all life and entropy in the Xa-Osoro System.

SOCIETY

The tragedy that befell Osoro permeates everyday life in the Solar Court more than it has other Xa-Osorans; while everyone in the system gazes up to the sky and remembers the tragedy whenever a Court's Waltz reaches its zenith, the reminders are constant for the people living in Xa's solar temples or on *Dissolution's Child* as it orbits Osoro. As star and black hole orbit one another, the people dwelling in the Solar Court get a front row seat to the murder of an empress, as Osoro's gravitational pull constantly siphons matter from Xa into its singularity, surrounding the black hole in a golden halo of light that renders it visible to the naked eye. To most, Osoro's siphoning of Xa's matter is viewed with tragedy; a harrowing reminder of the system's inevitable fate once Osoro has claimed enough of Xa that the Empress's light is similarly extinguished. The wayangs of *Dissolution's Child*, however, celebrate the thievery as the world simply striding towards its inevitable end, an inky blackness where all bothersome light is extinguished forever.

The church of Xa is most powerful in the Solar Court, a feat worth mentioning as the Empress's clergy is prominent on every world in the Xa-Osoro System. While the church simply maintains day to day sermons and relations with worshipers elsewhere in the system, in the temple-city of Xa'lo the church is law, its archpriest also serving as a sovereign ruler. Several treaties exist between the church of Xa and the Radiant Imperium that establish and protect this sovereignty, the oldest of which is believed to have been penned during the Nova Age. While citizens of Xa'lo aren't required to worship Xa, the city's government offers a staggering array of social and financial benefits for those who do.

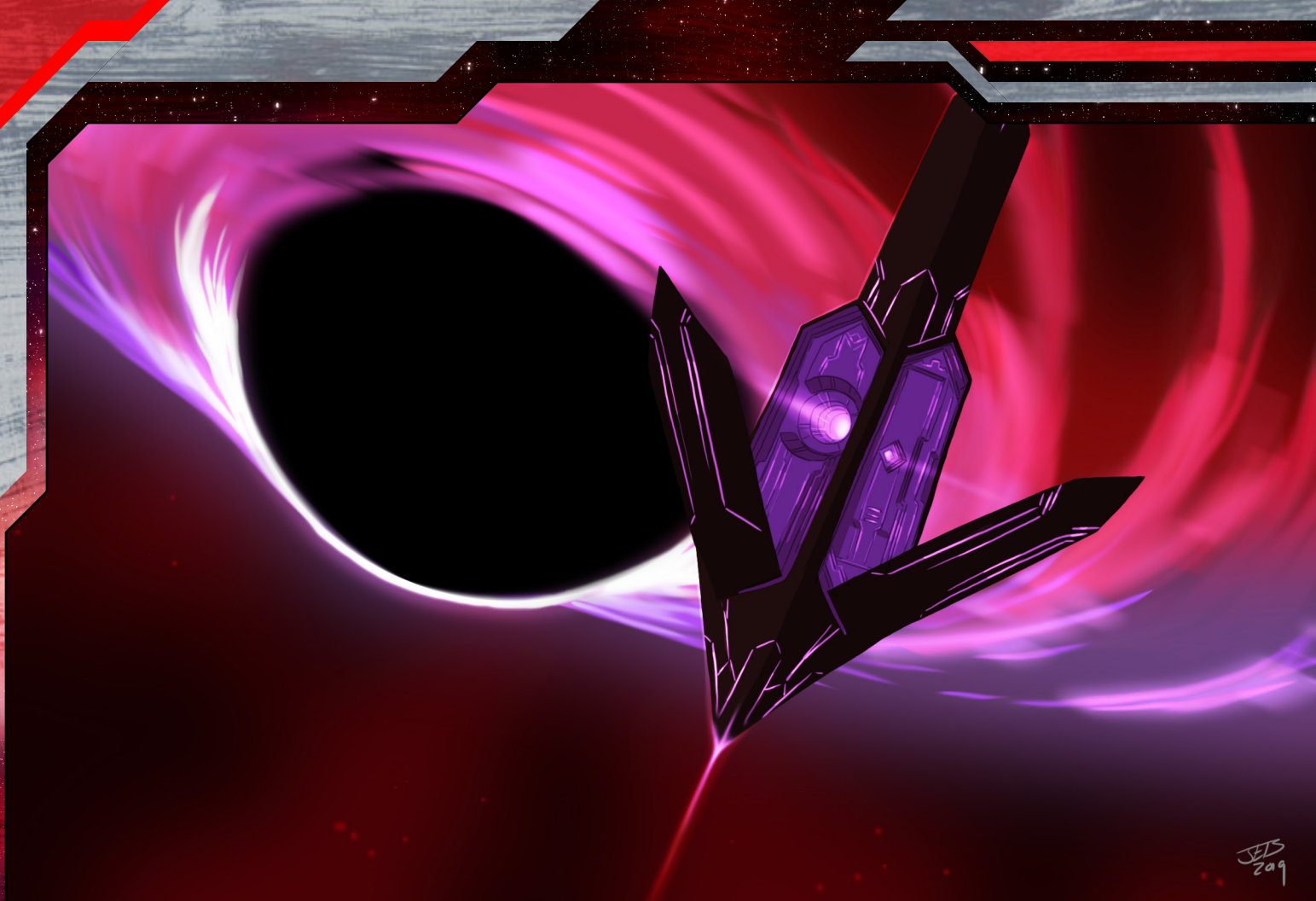
Similar to Xa, Osoro is also a center of worship, but not to the deity himself. As he exists following his death, Osoro is worshipped primarily by the broken and the damned, those who wish for the ultimate destruction of the Xa-Osoro System or even reality as a whole. As one might imagine, a

THE COURT'S WALTZ

All binary stars possess a baypoint, the center location upon which both stars orbit. For some binary stars, something with an even greater mass acts as the baypoint, such as a black hole or a anonymous gravitational distortion of some kind. In the case of Xa and Osoro, the baypoint is simply a fixed point in space; because both stars have equal mass, their own gravitational forces cause them to orbit one another in perfect harmony, much like a dance visible from every world within the system. Xa and Osoro's orbit around each other is known as the Court's Waltz by Xa-Osorans, a formal dance between Emperor and Empress displaying their grandeur.

The Court's Waltz occurs over the span of five months, during which Xa and Osoro begin their dance at opposite ends of the daytime sky. Over the first two months, the stars grow steadily closer, eventually eclipsing each other for the third month. Over the fourth and fifth months, Xa and Osoro return to their starting positions before beginning the cycle anew. The phases of the Waltz differ from world to world in the Xa-Osoro System depending upon where each planet is located in its orbit around the Solar Court. Historically, when Xa and Osoro came together for the waltz's zenith, days were brighter as the two stars focused their energies. Since the Regicide, when Xa and Osoro come together, Xa becomes eclipsed as Osoro's oppressive gravity absorbs nearly 60% of her light, creating an effect that appears much the same as a solar eclipse. Though these regular twilights don't affect the people of the Xa-Osoro System much, they're nonetheless an uncomfortable reminder of the tragedy that befell the Xa-Osoro System and the tremendous loss that's been suffered by its inhabitants.

deity whose areas of concern largely involve the death and destruction of all things doesn't attract many worshipers outside of a few superstitious souls who offer him prayers as a joke or in hopes that the deity will spare them some great disaster. Rather than Osoro's own faith, the most prominent religion in Osoro's sector of the Solar Court is that of the Dissolution, a godless philosophy practiced primarily by the shadowy wayangs with roots stretching long before the Nova Age. Based entirely around the inevitable entropy of the universe, this philosophy emphasizes wonders of singularity, when all shall join the eternal shadow. In ages long past, adherents to the Dissolution believed this eternal shadow to mean the dark of the Shadowscape, but with modern understandings of science the religion now interprets the eternal shadow as the heat death of the Mortal Universe, when all will be made one in singularity. Since expanding the scope of their religion, the Dissolution has begun to attract followers of other species in addition to the wayangs themselves, especially as the ravages of blood space have increasingly led many to a crisis of faith.



JES
2019

Despite the wonders of the Solar Court, life on Xa or aboard the *Dissolution's Child* is frightfully mundane. Most people go about their day, working and worrying about where their next paycheck comes from. While the Radiant Imperium doesn't technically rule over either star, worship of Xa is so heavily ingrained into the Imperium's way of life that the government tithes an entire military police force to the church, which it uses to patrol the streets and enforce order. As a result, it's distressingly common to see armed soldiers marching down the streets of Xa'lo, decked in resplendent armor emblazoned with the Empress's sigils and symbols. Yet clerical trappings don't lessen the imperial trainings these soldiers have, and much of the brutality displayed by imperial startroopers elsewhere in the system is just as common on the sacred streets of Xa'lo. On *Dissolution's Child*, by contrast, the Imperium has next to no presence and the religious leaders who hold sovereign power on the space station care little for the rules and regulations of the Imperium, which has attracted lawless types and outcasts from across the system. While many citizens are concerned about the drug gangs and illicit goods exchanges that happen in the lower levels of the space station, the leaders of the Dissolution largely turn a blind eye to such happenings so long as their sermons and worship are unaffected, and some say that the Dissolutionist leadership is secretly offered tithes and bribes for turning a blind eye to the rampant crime and corruption on the station.

POINTS OF INTEREST

The following are just a few of the notable points of interest on Xa and Osoro.

DISSOLUTION'S CHILD

Although hundreds of wayang planet-class ships dance around Osoro, carefully staying just out of reach of the black hole's gravitational pull, the largest and grandest of these ships is known as the *Dissolution's Child*, a massive starship the size of a large asteroid that remains in perpetual orbit around Osoro. From here, wayangs celebrate the inevitable destruction of all things as part of a religious philosophy their people have held for thousands of years called the Dissolution. The *Dissolution's Child* is fully outfitted for civilian use, and some consider the ship more of a colony than a proper starship. Massive turbines create artificial gravity for the ship's inhabitants and everything from gloomy streets to shadowy parks decorate its interior. Ultimately, life on the *Dissolution's Child* is one of hard work and suffering—core tenants of the Dissolution, which states that if wayangs are to properly rejoin the eternal shadow from which their people sprung post-mortem, they must first extinguish the fire that glows within every mortal soul through hard work and personal longevity. As a result, wayangs are careful to avoid actions that might lead to an untimely death, for they believe an early death is more likely to cause their soul to

reincarnate for another lifetime rather than allow them to rejoin the eternal singularity sooner.

For all its emphasis on religious study and enlightenment, the Dissolution's Child is a notorious hotbed for criminal activity in the Xa-Osoro System, particularly in its lower decks. The wayangs infamously refused to sign a sovereignty treaty with the Radiant Imperium following the end of the Nova Age, and thus far the Radiant Imperium's attempts to bring the rebellious shadow folk to heel have been made with overwhelming losses, as assaulting the space station without becoming ensnared by Osoro's immense gravity is nearly impossible. The wayangs themselves are notoriously vicious in defense of their home and holy site, utilizing dozens of tractor beams to capture potential invaders and force them deep enough into Osoro's gravitational pull that escape becomes impossible. As a result, the wayang's control over their tiny sector of space is seen as absolute, though they tolerate much provided that their worship is left uninterrupted. Most of the people living aboard the Dissolution's Child work in service industries providing essential services to the Dissolutionist monks that dwell there, even if those services amount to cash transfusions in the form of tithes permitting the trading of goods and services that are technically illegal elsewhere in the system.

DISSOLUTION'S CHILD

N space station

Population 1.4 million (95% wayang, 5% other)

Government theocracy (Dissolutionist monastery)

Qualities academic, devout, notorious

OSORO'LO, HALLS OF THE EMPEROR

Before the Regicide, Osoro was once dotted with mysterious star-temples dedicated to the Emperor, just like those currently existing upon his mate, Xa. When Osoro went supernova, these temples were thought to have been consumed along with the rest of the star's mass, but recently the Reclamation has discovered the remnants of one of these ancient temples—Osoro'lo, commonly known as the Halls of the Emperor. Trapped within Osoro's event horizon, half of the ancient temple peaks outside of the black hole, while the rest is consumed within it. The Reclamation has identified a small, winding anomaly within Osoro's gravity that seems to lead directly to the temple's tallest tower, but all attempts made by the Reclamation to enter and explore Osoro'lo have met with disaster. Few pilots are skilled enough to navigate this dangerous path, and those who fail are pulled directly into Osoro, never to be seen again. The Reclamation's leaders dream of what secrets may be stored within Osoro'lo and theorize that the ruin might have once been Osoro's counterpart to Xa'lo, but none are willing to mount what is effectively a suicide mission into a black hole to figure out just what, exactly, keeps the temple from being fully engulfed by the star it once paid homage to.

THE COURT'S GATES

All stars are so immense that their gravity effectively rends space-time asunder, ripping holes into the fabric of reality and creating permanent gateways into Eden, the plane from whence all positive energy springs. These gateways are crucial to the health of the cosmos; they allow souls from Eden to pass through into the Material Plane where they attach to corporeal bodies, effectively allowing mortal creatures to exist in the first place. When a star collapses into a black hole, however, the incredible pressure flips the gateway's polarities, instead allowing negative energies of Khaos to pour through. So too is true for Xa and Osoro—resting at each star's very core is a gate to another plane, Eden within Xa and Khaos within Osoro. Of course, the gravitational pull of stars and black holes are both so powerful that none have ever actually viewed a gate and lived to tell the tale. However, the theory that such gates exist is gaining traction across the galaxy in part due to observations made by Xa-Osoran scientists following the Regicide. Since Osoro's death, numerous undead horrors have been sighted in the void of space, horrific amalgamations of corrupted soulstuff animated into unlife that remain strangely unfettered by Osoro's immense gravity. Worse, collaborations with researchers from across the galaxy seem to confirm that the dead are over twelve times more likely to rise spontaneously in the Xa-Osoro System than in other systems, contributing immensely to the overall danger to those who dwell there.

Of the undead invaders who cross into the Mortal Universe through Osoro's Ebongate, nightshades by far are the most prevalent and horrifying of these invaders, vile creatures formed purely of negative energy that distinctly resemble shadowy versions of existing creatures. Scouting reports made by members of the Radiant Imperium dispatched to Osoro's space seem to infer an increased level of activity from the nightshades in the past few decades, their numbers amassing and becoming more hostile to invasions into Osoro's space. Some worry that the nightshades might be using Osoro's newly opened gateway to amass an army from which they can achieve their ultimate goal—the utter destruction of positive energy on the Material Plane. Should this be true, the Xa-Osoro System is primed to be a battleground between mortal armies and those of the Negative Energy Plane as they battle for the very fate of all worlds across the Material Plane.

For all the vile entities that spew forth from Osoro's Ebongate, it's unclear why an equal and opposing force hasn't stepped forth from Xa's Pyregate to defend the system from the undead invasions. While many simply believe that the denizens of Pyregate are uncaring before the suffering of mortals, the more terrifying thought is that perhaps they already have. Subscribers to such theories posit that it may have been the enigmatic guardians of Eden who spared the Xa-Osoro System absolute destruction when Osoro went supernova, redirecting the force of the blast into Eden itself.

If this is true, then it's likely that the gateway from where all souls in the Xa-Osoro System hail from might be devastated beyond comprehension, many of its champions martyred to spare the lives of the Xa-Osorans from an immediate death. And if that theory is true, then it might simply be that no one is alive on the other side of the Pyregate to help fend off the growing nightshade incursions.

THE PHANTOM STATION

Halfway submerged within Xa's rolling seas of plasma lays a space station of unknown origin, seemingly unphased by the immense gravity and temperatures of the Empress's surface. Reclamation scans indicate that the so-called Phantom Station appears suspended between realities, halfway phased into Hyperspace while simultaneously anchored to the Mortal Universe by Xa's gravitational pull. Reclamation historians have thus far been able to find no records of anything resembling the Phantom Station in any of the Radiant Imperium's space station logs, but scans indicate that the space station is Xa-Osoran in origin and is incredibly large. Most models predict that the so-called Phantom Station is large enough to possess roughly 350 million square miles of habitable living area; about as much as a standard planet.

Experts constantly debate about what purpose the Phantom Station might serve and why someone would submerge it within the Empress's mass. Despite all of the Reclamation's resources, only hypotheses exist. According to one theory, the Phantom Station might be a world ship built by the people of Azan before the planet's destruction during the Regicide. Models predict that it's possible that the force from Osoro's death hurled the station straight into Xa's gravitational pull, where it was quickly devoured. In another theory, the station could be from the far-flung future and was hurled back in time due to some sort temporal glitch, perhaps from flying too close to Osoro's event horizon. Whatever the case may be, the Phantom Station remains a mystery to those few Xa-Osorans who know of its existence; tantalizing because top Reclamation scientists have devised a method by which one could theoretically reach it by making a perfectly executed jump into Hyperspace and stopping at the precise point where the space station's Hyperspace beacon is located, partially phased in Hyperspace. Of course, a false trajectory could send such a daredevil pilot and their crew careening off into deep space or worse, straight into the Empress's heart. Top brass at the Reclamation have currently deemed such an experiment foolhardy and a waste of resources, so for now the mysteries of the Phantom Station remain hidden.

THE SHROUDED STEPS

A chain of artificially-created sunspots that roll across Xa's equator in a counterclockwise pattern, compositionally islands of supercooled plasma, the region's solar infusion inhibited by powerful magnetic fields. Artificially stabilized and mystically shaped by brilliant efreeti flamengineers, that

the Shrouded Steps houses a secretive efreeti enclave is among the worst-kept secrets in the Xa-Osoro System, as astronomers routinely observe all manner of otherworldly, flame-resistant beings enter and exit the enclave simply by delving into its churning depths. The efreeti of the Shrouded Steps welcome everything from magnificent angels and Xa's native isoleis to colossal fire elementals and oddly-motivated devils into their home, though mortals are seldom—if ever—permitted access. The few diplomats to the Radiant Imperium who claim to hail from the Shrouded Steps paint it vaguely as a place of wonders and wares, a realm where immortals gather and demigods confer, schemes, or simply rest without being pestered by mortal concerns. The few mortal eyes who have gazed upon the enclave and were allowed to return paint a similar description, describing it as a paradise of gold and fire that is, in many ways, akin to a vacation resort for outsiders seeking time away from cosmic plots and schemes. Within the Shrouded Steps, angels and devils relax in paradise side by side, though that doesn't mean that such antithetical beings do any more than tolerate one another's presence. The Shrouded Steps possess ironclad regulations for personal conduct within the resort, and those who violate them are condemned to several eternities of service within the resort to pay off their outstanding debt of poor behavior.

Mortals are strongly advised against visiting the Shrouded Steps despite any understandable curiosities that one might have about a deific resort. The infamous Blackfire efreeti family runs the Shrouded Steps with an iron fist, and their sovereignty is absolute within their resort. Those visiting the Shrouded Steps often find themselves wrapped in an endless litany of rules and customs that can find the visitor quite literally imprisoned within the resort for the rest of their lives if broken. The Blackfire family is ruthlessly persistent in their pursuit of mortals to staff the resort, as they often make delightful entertainment for the family's more profane guests. Across the Solar Court, there are countless whispers of mortals pressed into a lifetime of indentured servitude within the Shrouded Steps where they're made to wait on the resort's near-infinite parade of clients until they collapse from exhaustion. The most unfortunate visitors are sent to entertain the appetites of the efreeti's most profane guests, sometimes literally.

Roughly a decade ago in 295 AN, an anonymous infosphere video posted by a rare mortal visitor to the Shrouded Steps caught most of the wonders and atrocities of the resort on film, culminating with a graphic video of a pit fiend who swallowed a mortal man whole and left him to digest in his belly for several moments before regurgitating him, healing the dying man from the brink of death, and repeating the process seven times. This video created a massive public backlash against the Shrouded Steps, which Archchancellor Prax utilized to unite the people of the Xa-Osoro System under his banner against a common enemy. After consolidating power, his administration successfully negotiated numerous deals with the Blackfire family that saw several hundred abducted people return to their homes while opening opportunities to

travel to the result up to the mortal population. Of course, only the lavishly wealthy can afford the otherworldly luxuries that the Shrouded Steps is famous for, and talk of the efreeti secretly paying top credits for mortal "servants" from slavers like those associated with the Howling Esir.

THE SHROUDED STEPS

LE resort city

Population 2 million (75% efreeti, 15% celestial, 10% other)

Government autocracy (Blackfire family)

Qualities bureaucratic, notorious, resort town

XA'LO, JEWEL OF THE EMPRESS

Hovering in low polar orbit around Xa is a floating crystal palace of impossible scale, large enough that it glimmers like a jewel upon the Empress's brow. Despite its dangerous location within the star's sweltering corona, the palace is comfortably habitable by humanoids due to aggressive technomantic engineering installed at some point prior to the Nova Age by the temple's mysterious artificers, of whom little is known. Although designed as a place of worship, a theoretical temple-place for the Empress should she ever choose to manifest within the Mortal Universe, the otherworldly scale of the balance, designed to feel labyrinthine and room even to a fully grown dragon, have ultimately transformed the so-called Jewel of the Empress into a functional city-state inhabited primarily by the highest-ranking members of the Church of Xa. As one might expect, the Church is sovereign within Xa's most sacred temple, its economy sustained primarily by tourism, memorabilia sales, crafting and cultivating solarian crystals, and religious iconography. Despite its status as a holy site, not everyone living within Xa'lo is a member of the church; numerous nonsecular businesses and residents have flocked to Xa'lo over the past several decades due to the massive amounts of available space compared

to overcrowded Tor and the distinct lack of otherworldly contagions or corporate oversight. Of course, no habitable location in the Xa-Osoro System is without its flaws, and on Xa'lo that flaw takes the form of a totalitarian theocracy that is begrudgingly supported by the Radiant Imperium. In Xa'lo, the rulers of the church are likewise the rulers of the city and they recognize Xa and Xa alone as their supreme ruling authority and refuse to formally rejoin the Radiant Imperium until a new emperor or empress has been chosen and their sovereignty has been blessed by their goddess. Since the end of the Nova Age, several majority leaders in the Radiant Imperium have attempted to force Xa'lo back into the empire by force, but the Jewel of the Empress holds a powerful deterrent—a powerful weapon capable of focusing Xa's abundantly available starlight into a particle beam canon capable of destroying even the most heavily-armed ultranoughts with a single blast.

XA'LO

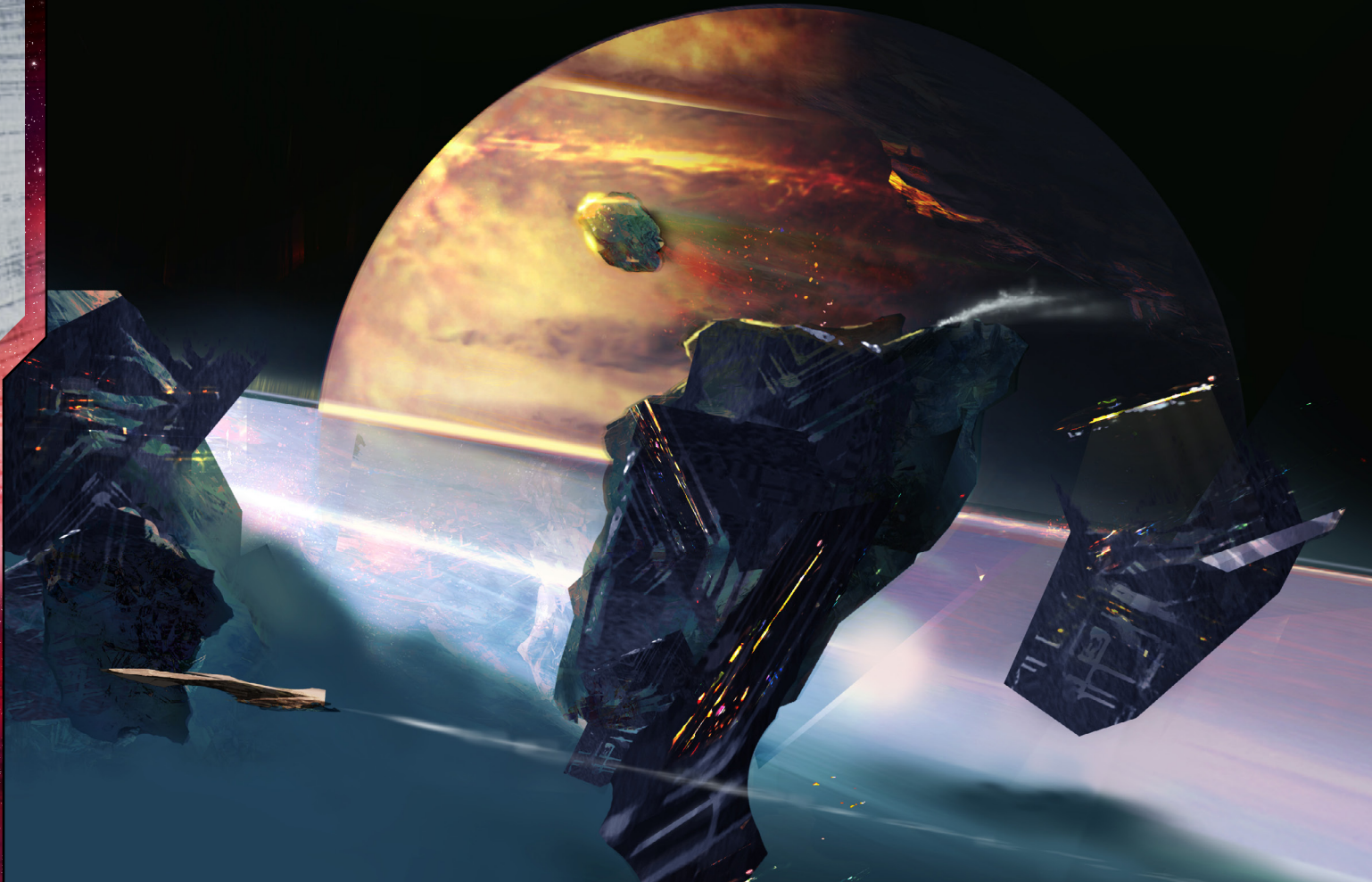
LN metropolis

Population 1.5 million (20% celestial, 15% dwarf, 15% human, 15% kitsune, 15% kobold, 10% elf, 10% other)

Government theocracy (Church of Xa)

Qualities bureaucratic, devout





THE BELT OF AZAN

"Her's is a terrible serenity, is it not? I can't deny that there's a certain beauty to her, silhouetted before that damnable crimson. But always remember this when viewing the Belt, cadet. No matter how beautiful she looks, she's a tomb. A mass grave that floats around the corpse of a god in an uncaring void. Never forget that."

– Hykiro Starflare, Grand Admiral of the Azanward Armada.

THE BELT OF AZAN

THE RUINS

Diameter	Up to 200 miles across for any single asteroid
Mass	$\times 3/4$ (less than 1/100 for any single asteroid)
Gravity	Varies
Atmosphere	Varies
Local Day	Varies
Local Year	Varies
Population	450 million (35% kobold, 20% kitsune, 10% dwarf, 10% human, 10% mechanoi, 5% deoxyian, 10% other)

During a time all but forgotten by the fugue of the Nova Age, there existed a planet called Azan. First in orbit around the binary stars Xa and Osoro, the so-called Golden Light was the birthplace of humanity and dozens of other sapient species in the Xa-Osoro System, including kitsune, kobolds, tengu, and more. The people of Azan were the first in the system to travel the stars, the Radiant Imperium developing the technology before anyone else. Even as world after world submitted or joined the Imperium, Azan remained its radiant jewel. Planetary economies boomed, wars had all but ceased, and technology advanced at unprecedented rates. Marvels the likes of which are scarcely understood today began, such as the 1010 SuperRing and the terraforming of worlds. With each passing day, Azan became more and more the Golden Light its progenitors claimed it to be. But sadly, nothing gold can stay.

At some point during the Nova Age, Azan burned. When Osoro, one of the system's binary stars, suddenly collapsed into a black hole with apocalyptic force, the faithful of the Radiant Imperium believe that the goddess Xa did all she could to shield the people of the star system that bears her name from devastation, rerouting much of the cataclysmic blast from Osoro's death into the very fabric of the Mortal Universe, causing immense lesions between planes that caused blood space to spill forth like cosmic blood from a wound born by reality itself. Yet for all her power, the Empress's divine intervention couldn't save the royal stars' nearest and most precious child, Azan. Tremors in reality and nuclear fire struck the Radiant Imperium's home world head-on, erasing billions of lives in a single wave of solar flame and killing the Imperium's mortal ruler and nearly all of their extended family. In an instant, the heart of the Imperium shattered.

Though traumatic, the fugue of the Nova Age has obscured much of the details regarding the horrific details

of the Nova Age from memory and historical accounts alike. Perhaps the greatest testament to the tragedy suffered by the Xa-Osorans that lingers even beyond this fugue are the millions of asteroids that orbit around Xa and Osoro as they complete their solar waltz, marking the remains of a dead world like a ring of tombstones. Today, that asteroid belt is remembered as the Belt of Azan, sometimes called "the Ruins." There, they say, died an empire.

GEOGRAPHY

The Belt of Azan is composed of millions of individual asteroids circling the Empress in a loosely dispersed ring centered along the orbit of the former planet Azan. Most of the asteroids are relatively bare, lacking breathable atmosphere or surface biomes. Even these supposedly lifeless rocks are temporarily occupied by prospectors who reside in their ships or in portable shelters, however. Other asteroids in the belt are wildly diverse, ranging from volatile spheres of caustic elemental matter to fertile hanging gardens. Potable water is scarce in the belt, appearing naturally on very few asteroids and almost always under close guard. Millions of asteroids comprise the Belt of Azan, each wrought with hazards and potential treasures. Approximately a hundred of these asteroids are sufficiently spacious for sapient life, the largest of which are up to 200 miles in diameter. There, entire city-states are erected upon the asteroids' surfaces or tunneled deep within them, some possessing technology as advanced as the Radiant Imperium's and others an idyllic haven of pre-technological culture.

Most asteroids are far enough apart that any pilot with half a sensor can steer safely between them with ease, but collisions between asteroids often cause them to move sporadically, making fields where maneuvering can be lethally challenging. Furthermore, the asteroids are so numerous with their own peculiar orbital characteristics that locating the same asteroid twice can be difficult without use of proper deployment of a system-wide positioning relay apparatus. Each asteroid is like its own microsystem, a miniature world with its own geography and environments. While most of the Belt's asteroids are barren rocks, the larger ones are sometimes able to cling to remnants of Azan's atmosphere and possess defiant enclaves of habitable life modelled after a staggering array of environmental biomes, some perfectly replicating specific regions of ancient Azan while others representing entirely new and alien environments suited for their peculiarity. In most cases, these asteroids linger due to the presence of powerful nature spirits called kami, which once inhabited Azan en masse. Through their perseverance, these reservations house many relics and species native to Azan that were once thought lost forever, shielding them from rapid asphyxiation in an uncaring void.

In addition to the diverse environments found on the asteroids floating amidst the Belt of Azan, the damnable crimson nebula known as blood space is thicker in the Belt

of Azan than anywhere else in the Xa-Osoro System due to the planet's proximity to Osoro when the star collapsed into a black hole. As a result, blood space permeates the Belt of Azan in thick clouds that lazily drift from asteroid to asteroid, leaving behind scores of demonic entities and warping whatever enclaves of life they happen across. Demons are especially common in the Belt of Azan, though thankfully most are content to flit about from asteroid to asteroid, causing immense but thankfully localized chaos. Compared to elsewhere in the Xa-Osoro System, the blood space that can be found in the Xa-Osoro System is undiluted and incredibly potent even centuries after its initial release. As a result, those who come into direct contact with the crimson, ichor-like substance are quickly afflicted with blood madness, becoming overwhelmingly mutated and maddened in mere moments. While the kami are able to defend their wards somewhat against this corruption, prolonged exposure mutates even them.

RESIDENTS

Despite being a barely habitable planetary graveyard, a surprising number of people make the Belt of

Azan their home. Although few could be truly considered native to the Ruins, thoughts of sapient beings inhabit kami enclaves scattered across the Belt. These enclaves include everything from humanoids and other sapient beings once native to Azan to far more unusual sights, such as enclaves of uplifted animals or entire groves of plantlike creatures.

Kitsune are surprisingly common in the Belt of Azan, in part because of their close ties to kami and the ancient spirits of Azan. Several notable kitsune communities can be found drifting amidst the Belt, protected by kami guardians who keep out intruders and keep their asteroid homes habitable. Kitsune living in these communes rarely contact the outside world and seldom utilize their shapechanging abilities, mostly wandering about in their true forms. Additionally, kitsune make up the majority of the forces of the Azanward Armada, an independent activist group that travels about the Belt of Azan on kami-piloted starships, destroying demonic incursions and protecting the kami enclaves that dwell there from imperial exploitation. The Azanward Armada's kitsune are drawn almost equally from imperial worlds and the enclaves they protect. For enclave kitsune, a life of service aboard a kami-warded starship is among the highest honors any can hope to achieve. Imperial kitsune, by contrast, often hail from the planet Tor and join the Armada for a means to escape the persecution and destitution that many of their kind face on the Anvil.

More numerous than even the kitsune, kobolds are a common sight in the Belt of Azan. The majority of kobolds living in the Belt of Azan are employees of the infamous Dragonheir Concordance, a corporate family of kobolds that specializes in the mining and wholesale of rare metals and minerals. Conditions for Dragonheir Concordance are infamously terrible; it's not uncommon for kobold workers to have to work six days a week for 12 hours or longer, toiling away in subpar minds scattered across hundreds of thousands of miles. A worker's cut is also disparagingly low, and a distressing number of kobolds are employees not by choice, but by inheritance. Outsiders note that the Dragonheir Concordance uses numerous propaganda techniques to exploit the kobolds, utilizing fear mongering to convince many that an even worse life awaits them in the world at large if not for the company's good graces. Among non-kobolds, rumors abound that the Dragonheir Concordance has even begun to mine its kobold laborers, forcing them to sign away rights to bodily tissue, organs, and other products for wholesale. While such clauses are usually invoked posthumously to literally scrounge as much profit as possible from every worker, some sources claim that the Dragonheir Concordance has begun laying claim to kobold reproduction, paying for the laying and fertilization of kobold eggs before shipping them off to secret facilities where every trait of the unborn child is genetically optimized and environmentally shaped to produce the ideal Dragonheir Concordance worker. The Dragonheir Concordance actively denies such claims as being nothing more than hurtful



propaganda propagated by XLG, but nevertheless most folks can't help but view kobold zealotry for the Concordance in a new light after hearing the rumors for the first time.

In addition to the residents who call the Belt of Azan home, the Ruins are a notorious haven for outlaws, smugglers, and anyone else keen on avoiding the law. Despite legally being part of the Radiant Imperium, the Imperium lacks any capacity to meaningfully regulate the asteroid belt and piracy, theft, and outright predation are ever-present dangers there, be it from slavers looking to sell to gnoll taskmasters or genehunters looking to provide new stock to despicable deoxyian corporations. While the Azanward Armada fends off such threats wherever it can and notable exceptions exist, they can't be everywhere so self-defense is the only defense most visitors should expect. The relatively-mundane threats of pirates and outlaws pale in comparison to the dangers presented by the fiends and fell spirits that infest the belt, however. Since many asteroids lack a magnetosphere or kami strong enough deflect roaming red clouds of blood space, the belt's rocks and ruins are regularly saturated with unhealthy doses of viscera and its corrupting radiations. Attracted and bolstered by blood space, Abyssal entities appear amongst the ruins with alarming frequency. These demons bear allegiance to no one, and the notion that they are simply there to inflict random horrors upon unlucky victims is far preferable to the contrary notion—that they might be gathering on these lonely rocks with deliberate intent to expand their influence.

Despite all of these dangers, the Belt of Azan remains a hotspot for adventurers and treasure-hunters, as well as organizations like the Reclamation. The artifact-rich field of debris is large enough and confused enough that amazing discoveries still await, hidden among all those hunks of rock floating in the vast black void of space. The system is full of rumors of what might still be left over from the crumbling of old Azan—abandoned temples to the sun gods, lost super-weapons of the Radiant Imperium's capital fleet, or even deeply-buried stasis-pods of actual Azan survivors. For every old miner who grumbles that all the good strikes have been claimed, there is a fresh account of lucky prospectors newly uncovering something of staggering value, drawing the dangerous attention that come with such a find.

SOCIETY

Despite the destruction of the planet that lends the Belt its name, the Belt of Azan is an incredibly valuable location in the Xa-Osoro System where life stirs amidst the wreckage. Driven by hardscrabble tenacity, mad ingenuity, or simple desperation, dozens of diverse species and countless rival factions have claimed the Belt's myriad asteroids as their own. Asteroid mining is a thriving industry, as the remnants of Azan are rich with precious substances; while the naturally-occurring minerals alone would be well worth extracting, many asteroids also contain deposits of rare, even bizarre

substances believed to be supernatural by products of the Emperor's eruption. Additionally, many asteroids hold archeological value in the form of buried artifacts, and even extant structures such as bunkers, fortresses, and temples which were hardened enough to survive Azan's catastrophic breakup. Though some outspoken remainders of the Radiant Imperium decry the shameful heresy of scavengers picking at the ruins of their ancestral home, in practice the Imperium has neither the reach nor the resources to police these so-called grave robbers who are often indistinguishable from the rest of the belt's swarming prospectors.

Outside forces such as mining activities and the chaos of blood space itself are constantly moving asteroids about, with each change altering the belt's webs of interconnected gravitational relationships. Mining companies regularly employ astronomical surveyors to update regional navigation charts, but competing organizations rarely share data, and less scrupulous outfits deliberately release faulty charts in order to frustrate amateurs and conceal valuable strikes. In addition to the navigational difficulties, most asteroids offer little protection from the corrupting energies of blood space, so when the ominous red clouds roll through, anyone who doesn't want to risk dangerous levels of exposure must either flee or hunker down in a shielded location. Safe places to take shelter get crowded very quickly, and local scavengers often take advantage of the urgency of the situation to take what isn't theirs. Those local denizens who have adapted to the belt's hazards tend to be either highly mobile or deeply invested in a few heavily shielded ports which they guard as if their lives depend on it – because they do. All these factors make the Belt of Azan a dangerous place to visit for an adventure, and a nearly impossible place to stay for very long.

POINTS OF INTEREST

The following are just a few of the notable points of interest in the Belt of Azan.

ASTEROID A/PHOENIX BASE

Asteroid AZ-99227, commonly referred to as 'Asteroid A', is a moderately-large asteroid approximately 100 miles across which is the site of Phoenix Base, nominal headquarters of the Reclamation. While the Reclamation's structure and operations are mostly decentralized, Phoenix Base serves as an important meeting place and spiritual touchpoint for the organization, literally existing among the ruins of what once was and conveniently outside the jurisdiction of any single government. A poignant milestone for any Reclamation expedition leader is personally adding a notable artifact or data-set to the base's vast Eternal Archives, and numerous Reclamation agents can be found frolicking in the pace's famous recreational suites, honing their skills with many of its acclaimed teachers, or recuperating in the Reclamation's expansive medical bays and numerous domiciles, both of which are free for use by any Reclamation employee.

ASTEROID A

NG Reclamation facility

Population 25,000 (35% human, 15% kitsune, 20% kitsune, 10% dwarf, 10% elf, 10% kobold, 10% nuar, 3% deoxyian, 2% mechanoi)

Government council (Grand Archivists)

Qualities academic, cultured, insular

THE DEMON HEART

One of the largest asteroids in the Belt also contains one of the system's most important archeological discoveries—a huge extant section of Heliopa, the capital city of old Azan, perfectly preserved since the planet's destruction within a massive shell of warped planetary core material. After drilling a shaft through miles of ferrous rock heavily laced with veins of cold iron, Reclamation archeologists descended into a massive cavern filled with withered gardens, silent skyscrapers, and the shattered dome of the old imperial senate. The value of the apparent find was vast and incalculable, not only in terms of artifacts, but the priceless volumes of pre-Nova Age history buried there, just waiting to be studied. Then the murders started. Reclamation agents discovered that the ruin is infested with hungry demons and tormented ghosts from a combination of blood space, the immense trauma and loss of life that occurred in the doomed city, and several sputtering portals located deep within the asteroid that connect directly to the Abyss. Half-dead explorers crawled from the mine shaft twisted, driven mad, or possessed by fell spirits who soon continued the slaughter outside the asteroid. Hundreds of hopeful tomb-raiders and support personnel perished in unspeakable ways before mission priority shifted to containment. Nowadays the asteroid known as the Demon Heart is secured under a strict quarantine imposed by the more conservative and militant Reclamation officials. However, the temptation to uncover the heart's treasures is too great, and dangerous, secretive expeditions past the quarantine and into the demon-infested city still occur on a regular basis.

SPIRIT'S VIGIL

The most powerful starship in the Azanward Armada's arsenal, the Spirit's Vigil is both a weapon of war and a place of quiet contemplation and worship. Powered and piloted by Vigilant in Stone, an AI empowered by a kami that has chosen the starship as its ward, the Azanward Armada uses Spirit's Vigil to observe and protect the Belt from all manner of threats.

SPIRIT'S VIGIL

NG Ultranought

Population 25,000 (75% kitsune, 10% human, 5% kami, 10% other)

94% kobold, 4% mechanoi, 2% other)

Government council (Azanward Armada)

Qualities militant

SUN'S EDGE

The innermost asteroid of the Belt of Azan is known as Sun's Edge, sometimes simply as the Altar, and is the closest orbiting vantage point from which one can observe the star Xa and the black hole Osoro as the two bodies whirl around the system's gravitational barycenter. Protected by an artificially-created atmosphere and heavy shields, the asteroid hosts several scientific outposts and the habitation domes of numerous sects, giving it the sophistication of a small, strange city. The eclectic population there includes a diverse coalition of peoples from across the Xa-Osoro System, many of whom bear a special connection to, or a dangerous obsession with, the duality of the cosmos. The asteroid's most prominent structure is Temple Zero, a black glass ziggurat, a holy site for sun-worshippers of diverse and sometimes conflicting denominations. The high abbots of Temple Zero enforce a strict prohibition against violence, acting as stern wardens to maintain the entire asteroid as neutral ground available to any and all who wish to worship, study, or simply reflect. A holy pilgrimage to Sun's Edge has become a tenet of multiple faiths in the Xa-Osoro system, and Temple Zero is a highly respected training ground for those solarians who can make the journey and withstand the withering scrutiny of the masters who dwell there.

SUN'S EDGE

N city

Population 50,000 (35% human, 15% elf, 20% wayang, 5% deoxyian, 25% other)

Government theocracy (Church of Xa)

Qualities cultural, devout

THE WARRENS

The Warrens are a network of hundreds of asteroids inhabited by the kobold tribes of the Dragonheir Concordance, serving as a home base for the corporation's vast fleet of scrappers, haulers, and other vessels. The tunnel-riddled asteroids which make up the Warrens are mostly clustered within fifty miles or less of each other, as the kobolds keep their holdings from wandering off with intricate arrays of orbit-correcting thrusters, gravity tethers, and nudging the big rocks back into place with their ships when they have to. The largest asteroids contain entire kobold cities, each heavily shielded and perfectly adapted to surviving the hazards of the belt. Hidden within the Warrens' clutter of floating rocks are additional surprises: dozens of slave pens, a poorly secured space-monster breeding ground, and a genetic research facility specializing in draconic heritage.

THE WARRENS

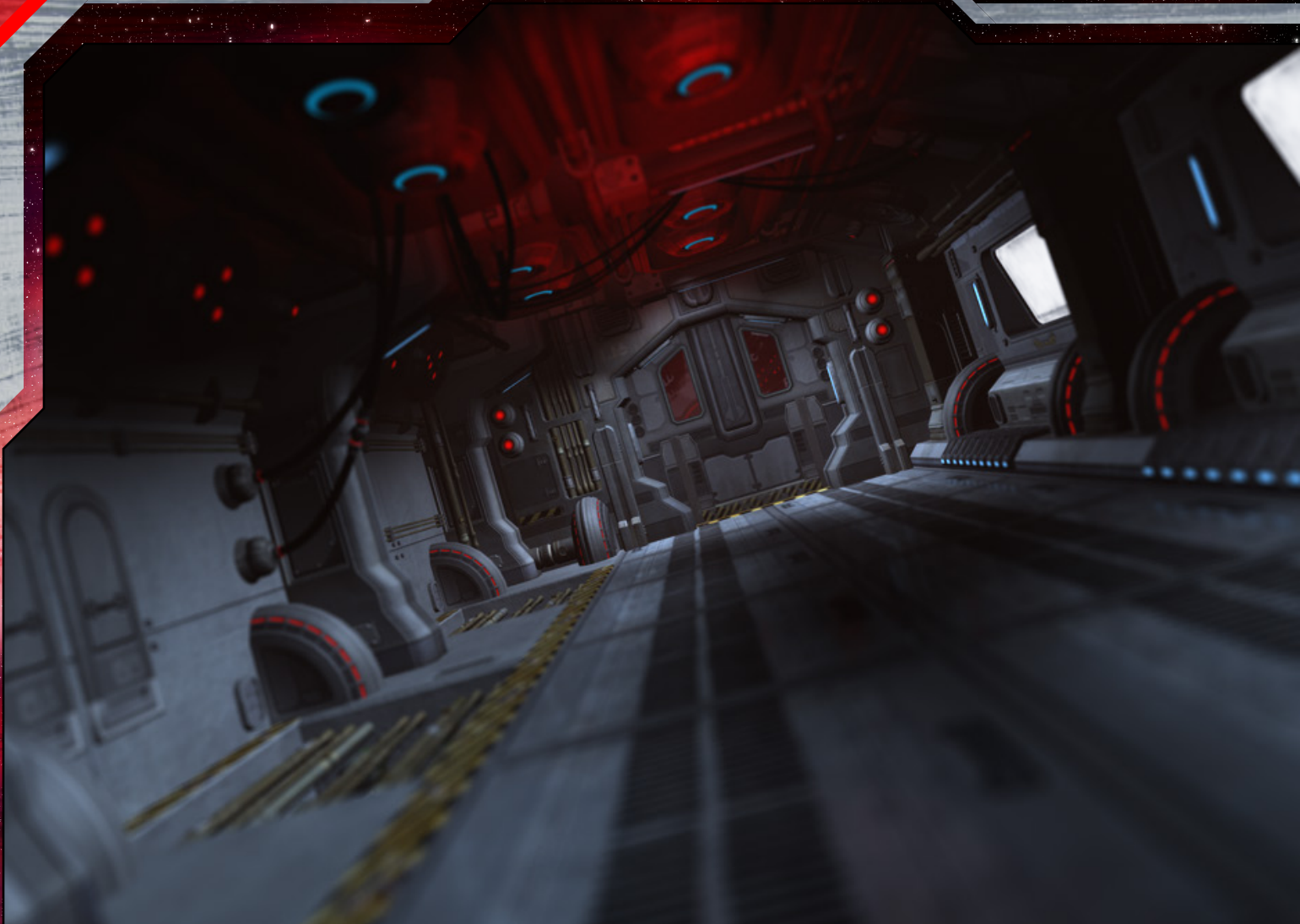
LE city

Population 147 million (94% kobold, 4% mechanoi, 2% other)

Government corporate autocracy (Dragonheir Concordance)

Qualities bureaucratic, dystopia, notorious





1010 SUPERRING

"The very soul of our civilization may be likened to a fire; a burning, unquenchable inferno that claws at the sky with smoky fingers without rhyme or reason. Simply, it is the nature of both civilization and fire to expand, and just like fire, if we are to expand, we must do so while reaching towards the stars themselves."

– Hudson Malroen, Creator of the 1010 SuperRing.

1010 SUPERRING THE CROWN

Diameter	x1.1
Mass	x100
Gravity	x1
Atmosphere	Breathable
Local Day	None
Local Year	400 days
Population	100 billion (70% mechanoi, 10% android, 7% human, 4% kitsune, 3% kobold, 2% nuar, 1% deoxyian, 1% dwarf, 2% other)

The 1010 SuperRing is an artificial ringworld, or at least the initial framework of one. This enormous megastructure revolves around the center of the Xa-Osoro system much like a planet, albeit as a continuous super-sized hoop with a circumference slightly larger than the orbital path of the former planet Azan. While the skeletal outline of the ring is complete, less than 1% of its arc has been filled in to provide full surface area; along the rest of its span it is little more than a latticework of structural supports and nanofilament cables laced across the 8,000 miles which separate the ring's port and starboard rims. Even at less than 1% completion, the ring already provides billions of square miles of surface – the equivalent of many thousands of planets. At present, only a tiny fraction of that surface is used for habitation and industry, with the rest devoted to vast arrays of solar panels which soak up Xa's unfiltered starlight, conveniently unobscured by most of the clouds of blood space that shade the rest of the system.

Notably, the 1010 SuperRing rotates perpendicular to the orbital plane of the rest of the Xa-Osoro system, jutting up at a stunning 90 degree angle from the great revolving disk of all the other planets, moons, and asteroids. This bold engineering choice has several advantages. First and foremost, since the Belt of Azan and the heaviest concentrations of blood space swirl about the system's orbital plane with the rest of the celestial bodies, by slicing perpendicularly through this hazardous zone (rather than laying flat within it) the ring's overall rate of exposure to potential harm is dramatically decreased. The two points at which the ring intersects the orbital plane still have to worry about asteroid-deflection and blood space's foulness as the ring rotates through the zone of greatest activity, but shielding two relatively small arcs of the great ring at any given time consumes far less energy than shielding the entire ring all at once. Since each section of the ring passes

through this dangerous zone two times during a single rotation, inhabitants of the ring experience 'the red season' twice each orbital year – a time of heightened security, increased aggression, and widespread paranoia.

The incredible and seemingly impossible construction of the 1010 SuperRing is one of the greatest mysteries of the modern Xa-Osoro System. The unverified yet common belief is that the framework of the ring appeared during the fugue of the Nova Age, built up by 1010 Robotics' mechanoi at the direction of the ring's legendary but perhaps apocryphal architect, Hudson Malroen. Experts both with and apart from 1010 Robotics debate to date about how an object so astronomically enormous could come into being similarly overnight and where the immense amount of materials needed to construct such a project could have come from. Evidence suggests that some of the matter used in the ring's construction came from the shattered remains of planet Azan, and 1010 Robotics continues to mine asteroids from the Belt of Azan for supplies to this day. Some speculate that 1010 Robotics is performing mining operations on other planes of existence to harvest extradimensional matter for minerals and metals essential to the ring's construction, while other theories posit that construction of the ring actually began in hyperspace, where the movers and shakers behind 1010 Robotics collaborated with eldritch forces in order to bring the foundations of the ring into being. Since the details of the ring's construction remain a closely-guarded secret, and 1010 ardently refuses to permit outside inspections, the ring presents many more questions than answers.

GEOGRAPHY

The 1010 SuperRing is beyond huge, built on a scale that can be described in numbers but is difficult for mortals to truly comprehend. The ring is over 650 million miles long, with a circumference just slightly larger than the orbital path of the former planet Azan. At 8,000 miles wide, when fully completed the ring will have an interior surface area of more than 5 trillion square miles – an amount of space equivalent to millions of planets. However, at less than 1% completion, the ring's current surface area is the mere equivalent of several thousand Azans. Nevertheless, the amount of space available is staggering. At present, area usage is typically focused around enormous habitation domes or industrial parks, with spaces between one structure and another filled with glimmering seas of solar panels. In order to keep the ring balanced, construction is spreading out symmetrically from the center-points of the ring's four quadrants, with the rest of the circle a sparse latticework of structural supports and nanofilament cables. The cold outer surface of the ring is perpetually in shadow, but hardly desolate; the space-side of the ring bristles with sensor antennae, starship docks, and supercomputing farms the size of continents.

The inhabited surfaces of the 1010 SuperRing are a diverse patchwork of wildly different environments. In some

sections, entire artificial ecologies exist where constructs game through their own evolutionary scenarios at a mind-boggling rate, free from the requirements of food, air, and creature comforts. In other sections, compartmentalized life support systems mimic the biomes of other planets, providing breeding grounds for useful life forms. The sections most accessible to the average traveler are cultivated utopias the Als have deliberately designed to accommodate and appeal to a cosmopolitan mix of constructs and humanoids. Still, these inhabited sections constitute but a tiny fraction of the ring's body; the vast majority of the uncompleted ring is a bare skeleton of structural framing, utility tubes, and access hallways thousands of miles long. In the most desolate stretches of the ring's span, a stranded visitor could walk straight along a single access hallway for a lifetime, dying of old age before ever encountering another sapient person. What exactly the ring will look like when complete, 1010 refuses to comment.

Hospitable environments are not always a given on the 1010 SuperRing, and adventurers need to be ready for anything. Large sections of the ring, especially the sections dedicated to industry or construct-only habitation, have either minimal life support or no life support systems at all. In those sections where full life support systems have been built in, the defaults are usually set to provide Azan-standard gravity, breathable atmosphere, and temperatures comfortable to the average Xa-Osoran humanoid. However, the ring is a huge place, and many sub-sections mimic the environments of different planets, some of which are poisonous, caustic, or otherwise inhospitable. Two notably limited resources on the ring are food and water; while 1010 Robotics of course provides all necessary sustenance for its biological employees, such amenities are the exception rather than the rule. There are a number of greenhouse-like biospheres scattered across the ring where planetary flora have been recreated or experimental crops are being grown, but in general the ring is a terrible place to forage.

RESIDENTS

The 1010 SuperRing is a world for machines, by machines. It is owned and operated by the mega-corporation 1010 Robotics, which often seems to exert godlike control over their vast artificial creation. However, significant pockets of independent factions and rogue actors do exist. The majority of the ring's inhabitants are mechanoi who were built in 1010's sprawling factories, with androids a substantial but still distant second. Unfettered by the expectations or limited imaginations of humanoid consumers, the ring's mechanoi, androids, and other artificial organisms are free to design, create, and recreate themselves in any image they choose. While some of the ring's artificial beings maintain the traditional bipedal forms which are easily recognizable to humanoids, a large and growing number of ring inhabitants eschew such constraints and enjoy ambling around in

animalistic or even stranger configurations. There are even zones of the SuperRing where corporeal existence is the exception rather than the standard, where untold trillions of data-based AI intermingle and evolve within the ring's vast embedded computer networks. Computer-stored residents occasionally load themselves into physical bodies as their missions and curiosities require, regarding their temporary corporeal form as dispassionately as a rental vehicle. These profound differences between life forms can make it difficult to relate to SuperRing inhabitants; while some are programmed to be fully fluent in basic social norms and one or more languages of humanoid communication, others may start off with programming that interprets humanoid visitors as inscrutable carbon-based threats. Even more than on terrestrial worlds, one cannot assume the nature or intent of these beings.

The living peoples of the Xa-Osoro System do have a notable presence on the ring, though the majority of these inhabitants are devout 1010 employees possessing such extensive cybernetic augmentation that it can be difficult to distinguish the biological residents from the artificial one. The ring also has increasingly become home to numerous communities of residential employees, and as those populations have grown so too has the number of non-affiliated businesses and organizations that have arisen on the 1010 SuperRing. To date, several planets worth of people live on the 1010 SuperRing in the numerous biologically-friendly zones and the 1010 SuperRing is always looking for more worthy candidates for its premiere ringworld communities. With such optimal living conditions, however, comes astronomical prices, and only fairly affluent people are capable of affording life on the ringworld; those who can't simply aren't permitted to be there, as 1010 Robotics doesn't take kindly to residents who can't pay their housing fees. Such individuals are rounded up by 1010 Robotics security and placed on the first shuttle to Tor where they are unceremoniously dumped onto the nearest terminal with whatever worldly possessions they managed to retain after the 1010 SuperRing repossession squads abscond with as much of their valuables as necessary to pay off any outstanding debts to the company.

SOCIETY

As one might assume of a hyper-scientific ringworld, the 1010 SuperRing is brimming with strange computers and dangerous experimental technologies. Whether constructed or biological, most inhabitants communicate via the ring's built-in wireless comm networks, facilitating a culture of soundless, invisible, ultra-efficient communication that outsiders often mistake for communal telepathy or some sort of robotic hive-mind. To guard against the plague-like threat of computer viruses, the 1010 SuperRing's infosphere networks are purposefully broken up into localized nodes surrounded by high-impenetrable firewalls. Hence, new information tends

to spread almost instantly within a small area, but that same data will usually remain compartmentalized within a sector until a higher-level administrator-intelligence takes notice and approves widespread dissemination. First contacts with the various local 'tribes' of node-linked robots can still be tricky, especially if a visitor lacks a full complement of 1010-approved pass-codes. While most of the AI-beings on the ring can theoretically access a multitude of language files and interface protocols in order to communicate with non-computerized visitors, sometimes it takes a while for them to realize they need to do so, and misunderstandings can be disastrous. Even once visitors learn how to interface with the denizens of a particular region, there is no guarantee such success will translate into other frontiers in the artificial wilderness. If 1010 Robotics has approved a particular excursion of visitors, the mega-corporation will gladly provide guidance and translation services, though such mega-corporate guides dutifully report all activities to their invisible masters. Supposedly 'independent' guides to the 1010 SuperRing exist, though these rogue operators often have ulterior motives and their own local problems.

The 1010 SuperRing is a place where technology reigns supreme. While 1010 Robotics and the mechanoi proudly count among their ranks some of the system's greatest technomancers, any form of magic or mysticism outside of technomancy is commonly regarded by the ring's denizens as vulgar and unrefined. Even technomancers must practice carefully on the SuperRing, as the ring's management tends to be distrustful of powers and abilities which defy scientific explanation, threatening the unflinchingly logical worldview of many inhabitants. Mystics, clerics, and other practitioners of non-technological magical traditions often find themselves under increased scrutiny while on the ring, with both native individuals and 1010's mega-corporate regulations aligned against the practice of these "forbidden" arts.

Because it has such an incomprehensibly vast surface area, the 1010 SuperRing is home to a wide variety of insular colonial societies which may have little to no contact with one another, separated as they are by great distances. Relatively tiny pockets of various humanoid societies flourish on the ring, where they've carved out habitable niches specifically tailored to their desires. In the case of New Azan, grateful humanoid settlers from across fractured Radiant Imperium have begun to recreate society as it was (or as they'd like to believe it was) on the shattered planet Azan. Likewise, in Cryptozaria, the nuar have forged their own society, incorporating their maze-core technology into certain strata of the SuperRing's infrastructure. Hundreds of other smaller colonies of biological life can likewise be found across the ring wherever 1010 Robotics permits them to settle (or, in a few cases, where they have not yet rooted out unwelcome invaders). For the most part, 1010 Robotics is reasonably welcoming to colonists who agree to abide by the mega-corporation's strict parameters for peaceful and productive life on the ring. However, rumors exist

of various groups who – either deliberately or accidentally – got on the wrong side of 1010's good graces, and found themselves unceremoniously "deleted" from the ring as if they were just another string of unwanted code.

POINTS OF INTEREST

The following are just a few of the notable points of interest on the 1010 SuperRing.

CRYPTOZARIA

1010 Robotics is willing to harbor just about any people who have the credits or skills to positively contribute to their ultimate goal of finishing the 1010 SuperRing, and the bovine nuar are no exception. Following their arrival in the Xa-Osoro System, 1010 Robotics quickly offered the displaced peoples a permanent home in their labyrinthine ringworld in exchange for the secrets of their maze-core technology. The nuar agreed to the bargain and the result was Cryptozaria, a sizable nuar settlement in an otherwise sparsely-developed section of the SuperRing's third quadrant. Consisting of dozens of interlinked habitation domes and outfitted with all the amenities of a large industrialized and metropolitan area, Cryptozaria is a clean and prosperous city where the nuar have thrived for over three centuries. Cryptozaria's population is almost entirely nuar simply due to the arrangements made with 1010 Robotics—any nuar whose ancestors partook in the original technological exchange with 1010 Robotics is provided all the financial perks of a high-ranking member of the 1010 Robotics corporation, including a monthly stipend, free room and board, and numerous other advantages, making the settlement appealing to all nuar born with such advantages. However, neither the nuar who live in Cryptozaria nor the 1010 Robotics board of directors are exclusionary towards other peoples wishing to live in Cryptozaria, and the city's laws and culture are welcoming towards non-nuar visitors and residents.

In recent years, Cryptozaria has become one of the most contentious sites on the 1010 SuperRing, the controversy centering around the use of the very maze-core technologies that the nuars traded in exchange for the site several generations prior. As the nuars expanded their settlement, they began integrating their maze-core technology directly into the infrastructure of the 1010 SuperRing, allowing them to seemingly alter the very terrain and the buildings erected upon it at will. The nuar view such additions as simple personalizations, akin to painting the walls of one's apartment or renovating a basement. Many outside residents, however, consider the application of maze-core technology to be incredibly dangerous, untested against 1010 Robotics' regulatory standards, and ultimately unwanted. As a result, there's been a growing coalition of non-nuar residents of Cryptozaria who have begun petitioning 1010 Robotics for the nuar's removal, citing the corporation's own rules and regulations disallowing the integration of unapproved

technologies into the 1010 SuperRing's infrastructure by unauthorized personnel. Nuar lawyers have countered that 1010 Robotics permitted their settling on the SuperRing in exchange for the very technologies that their critics protest, and that the contract their ancestors signed with 1010 Robotics makes them authorized personal within the confines of Cryptozaria. While some of the distrust for maze-core technology and nuar engineering certainly comes from security or architectural concerns, the most ardent proponents of evicting the nuar view their technology as a heretical infection, reviling the maze-cores and their proponents as they would an infectious contagion or a cancer. The 1010 Robotics board of directors is split on the decision, currently. While many noteworthy figures within the company have advocated for honoring their bargain with the nuars and defend experimentation with maze-cores as a reasonable subject of further resource, openly hostile campaigns seeking to terminate the nuar's experiments and delete them from the SuperRing are on the rise. The nuar, well aware of the rancorous sentiment and propaganda growing against them as well as the billions of credits that 1010 Robotics could save by finding a way to worm out of their agreement with the nuars, have in turn begun to militarize in anticipation of needing to protect themselves.

CRYPTOZARIA

N metropolis

Population 1 billion (50% nuar, 35% human, 10% kobold, 5% other)

Government council

Qualities notorious, technologically advanced

NEW AZAN

About 75 years ago, 1010 Robotics revealed an astonishing gift: nearly two hundred million square miles of habitable ring surface molded into a perfect replica of what post-Nova Age historians believe the continents and seascapes of the shattered planet Azan once looked like. Laid out on its own secluded stretch of the ring's fourth quadrant, the land was pristine and ready for immediate habitation. Some accounts claim that 1010 Robotics granted New Azan to the Radiant Imperium for habitation for free, while others insist that it was a devil's bargain with an unspeakable price. Either way, overwhelmed by this miraculous simulacra of their recently-destroyed home world, several factions of the fractured Radiant Imperium set aside their distrust of 1010 Robotics and forged a key alliance which has helped establish 1010 Robotics as a superpower of the Xa-Osoro System.

Today, New Azan remains the site of eager colonization efforts by multiple factions of the Radiant Imperium, assisted by sympathetic agents of the Reclamation. On New Azan's central continent, the imperials have begun reconstructing an homage of the capital city of Heliopolis, a base from which they plan on recreating their entire home world and

rekindling the great fire of their once-mighty civilization. Per a solemn contract, 1010 Robotics allows the imperials complete autonomy over New Azan's governance and land use, though 1010 does maintain a hidden but formidable robotic security presence above the skies and below the ground in order to protect the ring's infrastructure and keep their precious gift in good condition. A recent revelation threatens the hopeful peace of New Azan, however. A Reclamation geologist claims that the rocky continents of New Azan predate the Regicide and the Nova Age by hundreds of years, if not longer. If true, that means 1010 Robotics began constructing this planet-sized copy before the original Azan was destroyed, an outrageous revelation that could easily incriminate 1010 Robotics as unseen perpetrators of the disaster and spark a war. As of yet, the claim remains unconfirmed, but the unanswered questions it raises are troubling, and quiet campaigns have been launched to suppress this incendiary information.

HELIOPOLIS

N metropolis

Population 750 million (50% human, 20% mechanoi, 10% kitsune, 5% dwarf, 5% elf, 3% kobold, 2% nuar, 5% other)

Government autocracy (Radiant Imperium)

Qualities bureaucratic

PORT 1

Located on the 1010 SuperRing's first quadrant, Port 1 is the ring's capital city and primary spaceport, equipped with a dedicated hyperspace beacon that makes it easy for starships to travel there directly, even as the ring rotates through space. Though all starship approaches are always carefully regulated, and the city itself is heavily guarded against troublemakers, this 'free port' is a vibrant hub for system-wide trade, open to the public and welcoming to merchants, travelers, and even tourists. 1010 Robotics lists its official business address as Port 1, and the city is filled with office complexes, division headquarters, and all the trappings of industry. Surrounding these business activities are innumerable habitation domes, warehouses, and commercial facilities leased to the companies and subcontractors who do business with 1010 Robotics. Amenities and appearances inside Port 1 deliberately pander to 1010's consumers and business partners, giving the whole place an artificial seeming that some compare to the shiny, antiseptic glitz of a luxury conventional mall. Attracted by the constant presence of credit-laden businesspeople passing through the port, a wide variety of recreational enterprises also make themselves available throughout the metropolis, ranging from innocent diversions to sordid temptations which might be illegal—or at least quite scandalous—on any terrestrial world.

Despite 1010's best efforts to deter such things, mega-corporate espionage is the unofficial sport of choice in Port 1, as rival mega-corporations are constantly infiltrating the

port with spies and operatives intent on stealing 1010's secrets and/or sabotaging their legitimate business ventures. Though a typical trip to Port 1 is unlikely to reveal any genuine truths about 1010 Robotics or the ring's indigenous beings, it is a supremely well-stocked and well-attended trading post where nearly anything imaginable can advertised and found for sale. In addition to being an unrivaled source for advanced computerized technology, Port 1 is one of the system's largest marketplaces for new and used starships, with rows of space-worthy vessels stretching on literally as far as the eye can see.

PORT 1

N metropolis

Population 1 billion (30% human, 20% dwarf, 20% kitsune, 15% kobold, 10% ysoki, 10% other)

Government corporate meritocracy

Qualities bureaucratic, technologically advanced

ROOT

The city known as 'Root' is the birthplace of the mechanoi race, who were believed to be constructed in the ring's original production facilities; this factory floor has been preserved and enshrined by modern mechanoi and can be toured by those visiting the city to this day. Root is highly revered by the mechanoi people and is considered sacred to them, to the extent that it's a common practice in the Xa-Osoro System for off-ring mechanoi to make a pilgrimage to Root at least once during their CPU lifetimes. This journey serves a practical as well a spiritual function, facilitating a massive commingling of data that enlightens each pilgrim and adds to the communal knowledge base of the mechanoi people as a whole.

Inhabited by millions of mechanoi who do not require life support or the usual accommodations of a humanoid city, Root can be an uncomfortable place for biological visitors. No effort is made to make the very thin atmosphere breathable, and ambient temperatures run quite cold in order to optimize CPU functioning. Located on the ring's first quadrant, the city is also a marvel of unique architecture and innovative structures, with a skyline dominated by towering data-obelisks and huge ziggurat-shaped arcologies. Heavily shielded, defended, and patrolled, Root is one of the most closely-guarded locations on the entire ring, and the only hope non-mechanoi have for gaining entrance is individualized security clearance granted from the highest levels of 1010 Robotics—an almost unheard-of boon.

While it appears in many outward respects to be a mechanoi paradise, Root is a city of deep mysteries. Rumors abound of sightings of the late Hudson Malroen, the SuperRing's fabled grand architect, though 1010 publicly counterclaims that such sightings are misunderstandings created by the scores of artificial beings who choose to mimic Malroen's iconic appearance. More than a few visitors have fallen victim to grandiose scams put on technologically-

savvy con artists claiming to be the 'real' Hudson Malroen, which only adds to the local legend.

PORT 1

N metropolis

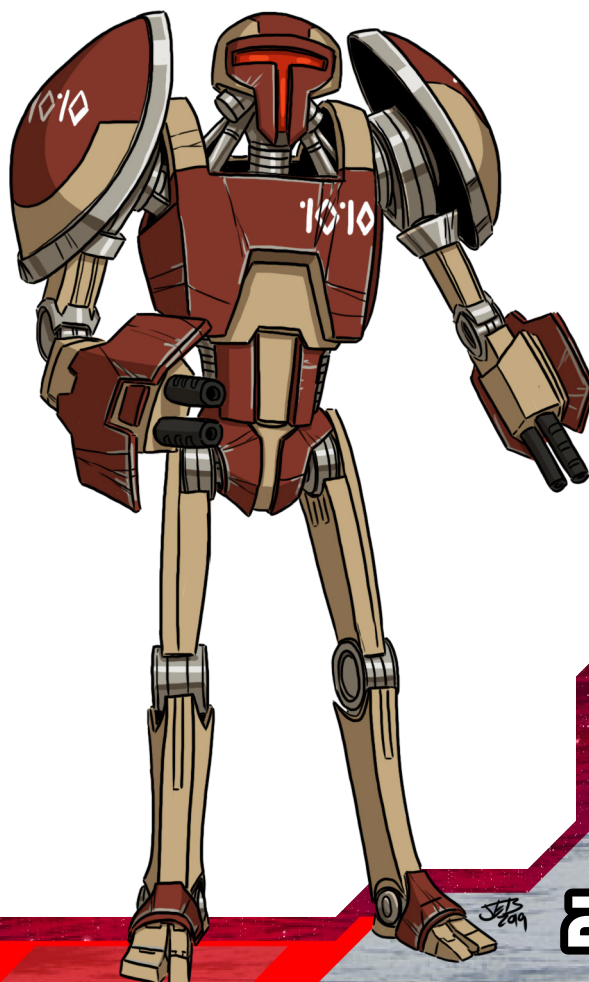
Population 5 billion (65% mechanoi, 20% sentient robotic organisms, 10% android, 5% other)

Government corporate meritocracy

Qualities bureaucratic, technologically advanced

THE ARC

The Arc is an expanse of habitable surface on the ring's second quadrant consisting of thousands upon thousands of miles of transforming terrain devoted to the unfettered evolution of artificial intelligence and constructed life. There, swarms of sentient nanites fill the skies over wild forests of fractal sensor growths, and animalistic robots in chimerical configurations compete with tribes of self-modified mechanoi. Powerful technomancers stand sentinel over this digital wilderness like the druidic wardens of old. While portions of the Arc may at times superficially resemble biological environments, this grand experiment is unconstrained by the limitations of organic life. Entire generations of constructs can rise and fall within a matter of days, their parts recycled and their data mined in order to optimize the next iteration. Programmed to kill or be killed, the inhabitants of the Arc are often hostile to outsiders, though some may be curious enough to keep an alien trespasser alive for their own experimentation.



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NEXT TIME

The fourth installment of the *Blood Space Gazetteer* will feature a detailed write-up of the Radiant Imperium itself! Once the most powerful government in the Xa-Osoro System, the Radiant Imperium shattered into numerous squabbling factions in wake of the Regicide. Now the imperials seek to regain complete control over the system. This supplement includes write-ups for each of the major splinter groups within the Radiant Imperium.